

COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT

Room 400, City Hall
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Tuesday, February 19, 2013
10:15 a.m.

PRESENT:

COUNCILMAN W. WILSON GOODE, JR., CHAIR
COUNCILWOMAN JANNIE BLACKWELL
COUNCILMAN KENYATTA JOHNSON
COUNCILWOMAN BLONDELL REYNOLDS BROWN
COUNCILMAN MARK SQUILLA
COUNCILWOMAN MARIAN B. TASCO

BILL 121040 - An ordinance amending Chapter 17-1300 of The Philadelphia Code, entitled "Philadelphia 21st Century Minimum Wage and Benefits Standard," by revising the definition of the employers required to comply with the minimum compensation standards established by this Chapter...

BILL 130012 - An ordinance amending Chapter 19-2600 of The Philadelphia Code, entitled "Business Income and Receipts Taxes," by revising the number of businesses that may obtain a credit against business income and receipts taxes upon contributing to certain community development corporations...

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COUNCILMAN GOODE: Good

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morning. This hearing is called to

4

order. This is a public hearing of the

5

Commerce and Economic Development

6

Committee on Bills No. 121040 and 130012.

7

My name is W. Wilson Goode, Jr., Chair of

8

the Committee.

9

I note that a quorum is

10

present. To my far left, Councilwoman

11

Blondell Reynolds Brown. To my immediate

12

left, Councilwoman Marian Tasco. To my

13

immediate right is Councilwoman Jannie

14

Blackwell, and to my far right is

15

Councilman Kenyatta Johnson.

16

The title of Bill No. 121040,

17

amending Chapter 17-1300 of The

18

Philadelphia Code, entitled "Philadelphia

19

21st Century Minimum Wage and Benefits

20

Standard," by revising the definition of

21

the employers required to comply with the

22

minimum compensation standards

23

established by this Chapter, under

24

certain terms and conditions.

25

The title of Bill No. 130012,

1 2/19/13 - COMMERCE - BILLS 121040 & 130012
2 amending Chapter 19-2600 of The
3 Philadelphia Code, entitled "Business
4 Income and Receipts Taxes," by revising
5 the number of businesses that may obtain
6 a credit against business income and
7 receipts taxes upon contributing to
8 certain community development
9 corporations or non-profit intermediaries
10 engaged in neighborhood economic
11 development activities within the City of
12 Philadelphia; all under certain terms and
13 conditions.

14 We will hear Bill No. 130012,
15 the CDC Tax Credit Program first, and our
16 first witness is Kevin Dow.

17 Please approach the witness
18 table.

19 (Witnesses approached witness
20 table.)

21 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Good
22 morning. Please state your name for the
23 record and proceed with your testimony.

24 MR. DOW: Good morning, Chair
25 Goode and members of the Committee on

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2 Commerce and Economic Development. My
3 name is Kevin Dow. I'm the Chief
4 Operating Officer and Deputy Commerce
5 Director for the Commerce Department of
6 the City of Philadelphia. I am
7 accompanied today by Tilahun Afessa,
8 Director of Policy, Revenue Department
9 for the City of Philadelphia. I am here
10 today to provide testimony in support of
11 Bill No. 130012. The bill will expand
12 the CDC Tax Credit Program from 35 to 40
13 CDCs.

14 Community development
15 corporations are a vital partner for the
16 Commerce Department and the City in
17 strengthening neighborhood economic
18 vitality and the creation of jobs. The
19 Commerce Department partners with CDCs
20 for outreach to existing companies, to
21 attract new businesses to occupy vacant
22 properties, organize and manage business
23 associations, facilitate workforce
24 training, implement improvements to make
25 neighborhoods and commercial areas more

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2 welcoming places, acquire and renovate
3 key properties, and develop new
4 construction for new job opportunities.

5 The CDC Tax Credit Program
6 offers businesses an incentive to provide
7 a long-term commitment of flexible
8 funding to CDCs undertaking such economic
9 development activities. Thus, this
10 program assures organizational stability
11 in years when other public and private
12 support may wane or may only be available
13 for programmatic purposes.

14 The Commerce Department
15 supports the bill's allowance for new
16 businesses and their CDC partners to
17 participate. The Commerce Department
18 intends to ensure that the organizations
19 that applicant businesses are selecting
20 to support are qualifying CDCs as defined
21 by the regulations for the CDC Tax Credit
22 Program.

23 Thank you for your time. I am
24 happy to respond to any questions you may
25 have.

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2 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Thank you
3 for your testimony.

4 Mr. Afessa, do you have
5 testimony?

6 MR. AFESSA: No, I don't.

7 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Just a few
8 questions. One, how many partnerships
9 currently exist within the program?

10 MR. DOW: Total number is?

11 MR. AFESSA: Currently
12 participating?

13 COUNCILMAN GOODE:
14 Participating now. How many signed
15 agreements are there?

16 MR. AFESSA: We have
17 potentially 35, but we have some problems
18 with one or two we are trying to resolve,
19 but 35 participants.

20 COUNCILMAN GOODE: So 35
21 agreements?

22 MR. AFESSA: Agreements, yes.

23 COUNCILMAN GOODE: There was
24 recently a lottery?

25 MR. AFESSA: Yes.

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2 COUNCILMAN GOODE: How many
3 partnerships were involved in the
4 lottery?

5 MR. AFESSA: In this one, I
6 believe 12 partnerships were involved and
7 five were selected.

8 COUNCILMAN GOODE: And which
9 five were selected?

10 MR. AFESSA: Which five?

11 MR. DOW: I have them. The
12 organizations that were selected, the
13 CDCs that were selected, were Village of
14 the Arts and Humanity, HACE, Mayfair CDC,
15 Project H.O.M.E., and Spring Garden CDC.

16 COUNCILMAN GOODE: And that
17 lottery was private?

18 MR. AFESSA: Question, please?

19 COUNCILMAN GOODE: That lottery
20 was private?

21 MR. AFESSA: Yes, it was
22 private.

23 COUNCILMAN GOODE: It used to
24 be public. Why is it private now?

25 MR. AFESSA: The law requires

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2 that the Revenue Department --

3 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Randomly
4 select.

5 MR. AFESSA: -- select, and we
6 have somebody from outside joining the
7 Revenue Department in this process, so to
8 make it more transparent.

9 COUNCILMAN GOODE: The question
10 is, the lottery used to be public and
11 open to the public, and actually I
12 attended the first lottery selection. I
13 haven't attended all the lottery
14 selections. My understanding is the last
15 couple of lotteries were private.

16 MR. AFESSA: This is the second
17 time we have conducted a lottery under
18 this Commissioner. The first time around
19 we made it only Revenue Department
20 representatives were there, and this time
21 we have added one from outside the
22 Revenue Department.

23 In terms of the law, our
24 understanding of that is it doesn't
25 specifically mention that it has to be

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2 publicly conducted.

3 COUNCILMAN GOODE: It does not,
4 and, in fact, it says the Revenue
5 Department can randomly choose. But the
6 tradition was that there was a lottery,
7 but the tradition was also the lottery
8 was public rather than private. I just
9 asked what's the reason for the change.
10 I'm not saying you're not within the law,
11 because you are within the law.

12 MR. AFESSA: That is the
13 recommendation. The next time around we
14 will make sure that we have -- we make it
15 public. But other than that, since the
16 requirement is not there by law, we've
17 done it the way the Commissioner wants us
18 to do it.

19 COUNCILMAN GOODE: You did it
20 legally. If you're willing to do it
21 publicly, that would be great, because we
22 received a great number of complaints
23 about it being private.

24 MR. AFESSA: I appreciate that
25 information.

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2 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Thank you.

3 Let me note for the record

4 Councilman Squilla is here as well.

5 Are there questions for this

6 panel?

7 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Yes.

8 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Councilman

9 Johnson.

10 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: How you

11 doing? Good morning, Kevin.

12 MR. DOW: Good morning.

13 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: I just
14 want to know the total dollar amount of
15 credit taken to date since this program
16 started.

17 MR. DOW: Total dollar amount.

18 MR. AFESSA: The total dollar
19 amount, it depends on -- it increased --
20 initially it was 10 as a pilot program in
21 2002 and it increased to 15 within a year
22 time, and then 2008 it increased from 15
23 to 25, and then in 2009, I believe, it
24 increased from 25 to 30 and then to 35.
25 Now this is -- the number increases now

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2 to 40. So prior to the last increase
3 from 30 to 35, \$100,000 was the
4 contribution each partner give to the
5 CDCs. When that increased from 35 to --
6 I mean, from 30 to 35, the contribution
7 decreased from 100,000 to 85,000. So
8 that means the total amount available up
9 to that point, up to this time, was \$3
10 million per year.

11 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Three
12 million?

13 MR. AFESSA: Three million
14 dollars. Eighty-five times 35 is just
15 around that ball park, \$3 million. This
16 one makes it \$3.4 million, the total
17 available for this program in a year.

18 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank you.

19 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Any other
20 questions for this panel?

21 (No response.)

22 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Seeing none,
23 thank you very much.

24 MR. DOW: Thank you.

25 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Our next

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2 witness is Rick Sauer.

3 (Witness approached witness
4 table.)

5 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Please state
6 your name and proceed with your
7 testimony.

8 MR. SAUER: Sure. Good
9 morning, Councilman Goode, members of the
10 Committee. My name is Rick Sauer and I'm
11 the Executive Director of the
12 Philadelphia Association of Community
13 Development Corporations, and I want to
14 start by thanking Councilman Goode for
15 his leadership on the CDC Tax Credit
16 Program and for putting forth this bill
17 to expand the program by five partnership
18 slots.

19 As mentioned just recently,
20 ten -- or five of the partnerships in the
21 program came to the end of their ten-year
22 term, and so the Revenue Department sort
23 of opened the door to accepting
24 additional applications. And as was
25 stated earlier, there were 12

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2 applications for those five available
3 slots and lotteries held, and those five
4 groups were selected. But for the groups
5 that weren't selected, there's no current
6 opportunity to participate in the program
7 at this point in time.

8 So clearly there's strong
9 demand for the program, both from CDCs or
10 businesses that have been in it for ten
11 years and coming to the end of their term
12 or have already come to the end of their
13 term and had to sit out for a year or
14 two, as well as groups that want to be in
15 the program for the first time to support
16 their neighborhood economic development
17 work. And looking at the economy and
18 what's happened with some of the federal
19 and state resources that support economic
20 development work such as CDBG that's been
21 declining by about a third or the state's
22 Main Street Program funding, which has
23 also declined, this really shouldn't come
24 as any surprise.

25 The flexible nature of these

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2 resources, the long-term nature of these
3 resources allows CDCs to plan, to put
4 staffing in place, to undertake
5 activities, whether it's to work to
6 strengthen the commercial corridor,
7 attract new businesses, do commercial
8 real estate development, do job training,
9 a whole host of neighborhood economic
10 development activities that creates jobs,
11 expands our tax base, and strengthens the
12 local economy.

13 So we are very supportive of
14 the proposal to expand the program from
15 35 to 40 partnerships while maintaining
16 the annual contribution and tax credit at
17 85,000 a year for ten years.

18 And I guess just one thing. I
19 think most of you all have seen the
20 Collective Strength report that we just
21 came out with recently, but that
22 certainly documents the type of impact
23 that groups participating in this program
24 have had over the last ten years. And so
25 we welcome the opportunity to work with

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2 Council and the Administration to ensure
3 the long-term success of this program and
4 ensure that it continues to be a vital
5 part of supporting CDCs' work to
6 strengthen neighborhood economies.

7 Thank you.

8 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Thank you.
9 Any questions for this witness?
10 (No response.)

11 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Seeing none,
12 thank you very much.

13 Is Steven Williams here?

14 MR. WILLIAMS: Yes.
15 (Witness approached witness
16 table.)

17 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Good
18 morning.

19 MR. WILLIAMS: Good morning.

20 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Please state
21 your name for the record and proceed with
22 your testimony.

23 MR. WILLIAMS: My name is
24 Steven Williams. I'm with the
25 Partnership CDC in West Philadelphia. I

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2 would like to first thank you, Councilman
3 Goode, for giving me the opportunity to
4 speak, and the rest of the members of the
5 Committee.

6 Partnership CDC is a
7 20-year-old organization. We were one of
8 the first CDCs that participated in this
9 Tax Credit Program in 2002. We just
10 completed our tenth year.

11 What we normally do, we do
12 housing development, financial literacy,
13 housing counseling, civic engagement, and
14 we have several contracts with the City
15 that allows us to do some of that work.

16 What we've been able to use the
17 Tax Credit Program for is to be like the
18 mortar for our programs within what we
19 do. It allows us to have flexible
20 funding, long-term funding, to fill in
21 the gaps to do some of the capacity
22 building and allow us to invest in
23 specific projects, plan for others, and
24 attract businesses to it. We've had a
25 great partner over the last ten years

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2 that allowed us to bring other resources
3 to the community by having that long-term
4 partnership, Reed Smith. They provided
5 all types of resources that we wouldn't
6 have been able to tap into without having
7 this type of relationship with them.

8 Some of the accomplishments we
9 had over the ten-year period is that we
10 developed over 80 units of single-family
11 housing in the West Philadelphia area,
12 approximately 50 units of tax credits
13 with partners. That number goes up to
14 about 75 to 80 with additional for-profit
15 partners that we were able to attract to
16 the community. And we've been able to
17 develop 20 units of mixed use along the
18 60th Street corridor. One of the things
19 that we were able to do in conjunction
20 with that is to come up with a plan for
21 the corridor, the 60th Street corridor,
22 and attract private investors to partner
23 with us to allow us to bring that to
24 fruition, from Market down to Catharine.

25 These things were possible

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2 because we had access to this long-term
3 capital that was flexible and allowed us
4 to use it in a way that would attract
5 more investment to the projects that we
6 were working on.

7 Two points that I would like to
8 leave with the Committee is that with
9 this funding source, having that
10 flexibility is very important to know
11 that you're going to have a certain
12 amount of resources to apply to different
13 programs so that you can plan and set a
14 course of how you want to attract and be
15 very deliberate without having the
16 problem of jumping from one funding
17 source to another. You have something
18 consistent that allows you to plan
19 forward.

20 The second piece that's very
21 important is that there is a great need
22 for this. There's a great value in the
23 tax credits themselves for the money that
24 it provides, but also with the partners
25 that you're able to bring to the table

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2 and to the community and the resources
3 they bring, not just the monetary but the
4 other services that you wouldn't normally
5 tap into by having that relationship with
6 the for-profit business. And at the end
7 of the day, all of the interests are
8 served. The business partner is allowed
9 to get their tax credit, they are vested
10 in a neighborhood development, and also
11 the projects generate income for the
12 City.

13 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Thank you
14 for your testimony.

15 Any questions or comments for
16 this witness?

17 (No response.)

18 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Thank you.

19 Is someone here from Logan CDC?

20 (No response.)

21 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Anyone here
22 from Korean Community Development
23 Services Center?

24 (Witness approached witness
25 table.)

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2 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Ms. Kim?

3 MS. KIM: Good morning.

4 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Good
5 morning. Please state your name for the
6 record and proceed with your testimony.

7 MS. KIM: Melissa Kim. I'm the
8 Director of the North 5th Street
9 Revitalization Project, which is the
10 community economic development arm at the
11 Korean Community Development Services
12 Center.

13 Thank you for the opportunity
14 to testify today. The Korean Center
15 strongly supports the expansion of the
16 CDC Tax Credit Program. We hope to be a
17 participant in the program in the near
18 future.

19 To give you a sense of the work
20 that we do, over the past two and a half
21 years, we have, among other things,
22 established an on-the-job training and
23 mentoring program for local youths;
24 delivered technical assistance to
25 entrepreneurs and small businesses on

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2 over 250 matters; spurred more than
3 \$200,000 in private investment, one small
4 business at a time; obtained \$99,000 in
5 Small Business Assistance grants on
6 behalf of clients; provided 66 hours per
7 week of sidewalk cleaning services along
8 the 5th Street commercial corridor,
9 collecting over 4,000 bags of litter;
10 facilitated ten storefront facade
11 improvements; installed the mural and
12 planted 13 trees.

13 Still there is much work to be
14 done, and access to ongoing flexible
15 funding through the CDC Tax Credit
16 Program would enable us to continue our
17 core operations, create stability, and
18 increase capacity.

19 We would like to, with the use
20 of CDC Tax Credit funds, start a jobs
21 resources center and a small business
22 incubator, hire an additional sidewalk
23 cleaner, and begin a capital campaign to
24 make 5th Street safer and more welcoming.

25 We urge the Committee to report

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2 Bill 130012 favorably out of Committee.

3 Thank you.

4 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Thank you
5 for your testimony.

6 Any questions for this witness?

7 Councilwoman Tasco.

8 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: I don't
9 have any questions. I just want to thank
10 you very much for your hard work on 5th
11 Street, you and Dr. Hu.

12 MS. KIM: Thank you.

13 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: And all of
14 the folks that are involved in that. The
15 program is in the 9th.

16 Thank you.

17 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Thank you.

18 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN:

19 Mr. Chairman, forgive me.

20 Melissa Kim?

21 MS. KIM: I'm sorry.

22 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: While
23 she's coming forward, may I thank Steve
24 Williams. That's the III.

25 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Let the

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2 record show.

3 I too wanted to go on record
4 for the work that you're doing in your
5 community and to let you know that we're
6 paying attention and are pleased to see
7 that this part of our city is intimately
8 involved with the work of CDCs as well.
9 So continue the good work.

10 Thank you.

11 MS. KIM: Thank you.

12 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Mr. Chin.

13 (Witness approached witness
14 table.)

15 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Good
16 morning.

17 MR. CHIN: Good morning,
18 Chairman Goode and members of the
19 Committee. My name is John Chin. I'm
20 Executive Director of the Philadelphia
21 Chinatown Development Corporation.
22 Thanks for the opportunity to speak
23 before you today. I'm here to testify on
24 Bill 130012.

25 I ask you to vote in favor of

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2 this bill out of Committee, which would
3 amend the City's CDC Tax Credit Program
4 by expanding the number of partnership
5 slots from 35 to 40.

6 PCDC and our partner, Hahnemann
7 University Hospital/Tenet, have been
8 long-time partners in this program. This
9 program has enabled us to implement key
10 initiatives that were identified in both
11 the Chinatown Neighborhood Plan of 2004
12 and the Vine Street Reconnecting
13 Communities Plan of 2003. The initiative
14 called for improvements to mitigate the
15 detrimental, especially dangerous, impact
16 of the Vine Street Expressway. This
17 expressway cuts right through Chinatown.
18 If you've ever walked across the
19 expressway, then you know how dangerous
20 it can be.

21 There were -- some of the
22 overall goals of the initiative were,
23 give a stronger identity to Chinatown as
24 an important place along Vine Street and
25 in Philadelphia in general, make Vine

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2 Street more of a connector than a barrier
3 in expansion of Chinatown to the north,
4 and empower the members of Chinatown
5 community to help them have a stronger,
6 readily visible impact on the growth of
7 their neighborhood.

8 The funding of this program
9 allowed PCDC to develop plans,
10 construction drawings and, most
11 importantly, leverage state and federal
12 funding to transform the area around Vine
13 Street Expressway. In all, this program
14 helped leverage more than \$4 million in
15 additional resources. The outcomes speak
16 for themselves and truly have transformed
17 the area surrounding Vine Street in
18 Chinatown. The stretch of expressway is
19 safer, more beautiful, greener, and
20 Chinatown residents now have a little
21 park for enjoyment. These are not only
22 my perceptions, but the perceptions of
23 the Chinatown residents and visitors.

24 I thank you for your time today
25 and again ask the Committee to support

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2 this bill. Thank you.

3 I actually distributed some
4 photographs of the changes that occurred
5 because of this program.

6 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Thank you,
7 Mr. Chin.

8 Any questions for this witness?

9 (No response.)

10 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Seeing none,
11 thank you very much.

12 Anyone here from Universal
13 Companies?

14 (No response.)

15 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Our next two
16 witnesses, Anuj Gupta and Kate O'Neill.

17 (Witnesses approached witness
18 table.)

19 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Good
20 morning.

21 MS. O'NEILL: Good morning.

22 MR. GUPTA: Good morning,
23 Chairman Goode and members of the
24 Committee. My name is Anuj Gupta. I'm
25 Executive Director of Mt. Airy USA, one

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2 of Philadelphia's most comprehensive
3 community development corporations.

4 I am here today to applaud the
5 Committee for considering an expansion of
6 the number of slots in the Business
7 Income and Receipt Tax Credit Program and
8 to urge you to pass this legislation with
9 expediency. It is sorely needed.

10 Mt. Airy USA, overall a small
11 CDC with a staff of eight, provides
12 services in critical areas to our
13 neighborhoods, including housing
14 counseling, corridor revitalization, and
15 assistance to small business owners and
16 real estate development in blighted
17 areas, both residential and commercial.

18 Despite our size, our impact
19 has been substantial. Just to give you a
20 sense, the Econsult Corporation
21 determined that through 2011, our housing
22 counselors have preserved 11.7 million in
23 property values citywide because of homes
24 saved from foreclosure. Through 2011,
25 our real estate activities leveraged \$28

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2 million in new investment in our city,
3 creating scores of construction and
4 permanent jobs in the process. And our
5 corridor revitalization program proved to
6 reduce crime 25 percent between 2007 and
7 2011 versus an 8 percent decline citywide
8 in various violent and property crime
9 categories.

10 However, funding decisions at
11 the federal and state and consequently
12 city levels have put future success like
13 this in peril. In the first six months
14 of 2012, Mt. Airy USA lost nearly 20
15 percent of its budget and was forced to
16 reduce nearly one-third of its staff.
17 Moreover, Mt. Airy USA as well as most
18 CDCs in Northwest Philadelphia no longer
19 receive any operating support from the
20 City of Philadelphia outside of our
21 housing counseling program. This is why
22 expanding this tax credit program is
23 essential. It is one of the last forms
24 of operating support for critical
25 economic development activities like

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2 corridor revitalization that CDCs have to
3 turn to. Expanding this program for the
4 2013 tax year will create more jobs,
5 induce more investment, make our streets
6 safer, improve the City's tax base, and
7 help us to become the world-class city
8 that we can be. These are not unproven
9 results. We know the impact that CDCs
10 are having and can have if they are
11 better supported. Please make this a
12 possibility.

13 If the Committee does vote in
14 favor of this amendment, we ask that you
15 also consider changes to make the tax
16 credit selection process more
17 transparent. The last two lotteries held
18 by the Department of Revenue in 2012 and
19 earlier this year have not been public
20 processes. There has been no opportunity
21 to ensure that selections are being made
22 fairly and properly. This is public
23 money and, accordingly, should be subject
24 to appropriate levels of transparency.
25 We would ask that the next lottery be

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2 open to witness by all applicants.

3 Thank you again for considering
4 this important measure. Again, we ask
5 for your expedient approval of this
6 amendment. It will make a difference.

7 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Thank you
8 for your testimony. Mr. Gupta, we
9 actually covered the issue of the
10 lottery, and while the Revenue Department
11 did act legally, they have agreed to make
12 it more transparent.

13 MR. GUPTA: Terrific. Thank
14 you.

15 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Ms. O'Neill.

16 MS. O'NEILL: Good morning,
17 Chairman Goode and members of the
18 Committee. My name is Kate O'Neill. I
19 am the Deputy Director of the Chestnut
20 Hill Business Association and the
21 Chestnut Hill Business Improvement
22 District. I'm appearing before you today
23 in support of Bill No. 130012. The
24 expansion of the business tax credit
25 program would give commercial corridors

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2 like Chestnut Hill a greater opportunity
3 for flexible funding, which it could use
4 to maintain Chestnut Hill, an important
5 tax-generating corridor in the City.

6 The recent budget cuts affect
7 City services and create the possibility
8 of losing the safety, security, and
9 beauty that Chestnut Hill is known for
10 and which it worked so hard to maintain.
11 A flexible funding source such as that of
12 the business tax credit program could be
13 of great benefit to ensuring the
14 stability of our neighborhood.

15 I would also ask that -- I just
16 want to thank the Committee for promoting
17 this bill.

18 Thank you for allowing me to
19 speak.

20 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Thank you
21 for your testimony.

22 Any questions for this witness?

23 (No response.)

24 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Seeing
25 none -- Councilman Johnson. Thank you.

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2 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: I did have
3 a question. Not for the witness, though;
4 just regarding the process. So just for
5 clarity, so if the Commerce Department is
6 going to make the process in the future
7 more transparent, does that mean more
8 transparent means specifically what? The
9 next lottery would be an open process and
10 other applicants who have applied to
11 participate in the lottery will be
12 allowed to come to a specific place to
13 witness the lottery selection?

14 COUNCILMAN GOODE: The law says
15 that selection is made on a first-come,
16 first-served basis, but for those
17 applicants that apply on the same day,
18 the Revenue Department can randomly
19 choose among them. What we've done since
20 2002, 2003 is to hold a public lottery,
21 and the Revenue Department has committed
22 to holding a public lottery for those
23 applicants who apply on the same day.
24 But other than that, it's a first-come,
25 first-served basis.

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2 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank you
3 for the clarity, Mr. Chairman.

4 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: Is the
5 application process such and do the
6 applicants know that they can apply early
7 or do they wait until the last day to
8 apply, which creates several number of
9 organizations applying the same day? Is
10 that clear?

11 COUNCILMAN GOODE:
12 Traditionally organizations have applied
13 before the last day. Sometimes
14 organizations wait until the last day to
15 apply. But I'm going to ask the Revenue
16 Department to come to the witness table
17 again.

18 (Witness approached witness
19 table.)

20 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Mr. Afessa,
21 from past experience, there were
22 applicants who applied before the
23 deadline, but there were also several
24 applicants who applied on the deadline.
25 Another thing that I heard, is there more

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2 than one day on which people can apply?

3 MR. AFESSA: Traditionally, as
4 you said, we never had any problem with
5 the applicants being out of the deadline.
6 They know in advance when the process
7 starts. For example, in this particular
8 situation when it expands from 35 to 40,
9 most CDCs already know about it. They
10 inquire about it in advance. And we put
11 out the application date, specific date,
12 what we are accepting the application.

13 COUNCILMAN GOODE: So are you
14 only accepting applications now on one
15 day?

16 MR. AFESSA: In one day -- at
17 one time, that's basically it, but now we
18 open it up a little bit by saying that
19 the starting date is this, but we'll not
20 accept after this date.

21 COUNCILMAN GOODE: So people
22 can apply on more than one day?

23 MR. AFESSA: People can apply,
24 yeah, can apply on more than one day, but
25 if the applicants in the first day are

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2 enough, then that's what the application
3 process is, the first-come, first-served.
4 So we close it in that first day. All
5 those applications arriving the same day
6 are considered to be coming at the same
7 time. So if there are more than the
8 numbers, there'll be a lottery on that.

9 COUNCILMAN GOODE:

10 Councilwoman.

11 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: Could you
12 explain the process? If there are five,
13 ten applicants, do you assign them the
14 business that we'll give the tax credit
15 or do they come to the table with a
16 business?

17 MR. AFESSA: As a matter of
18 fact, the applicants are the business
19 partners partnering with the CDC. For
20 the Revenue Department, the credit is
21 given to the businesses. So they are the
22 applicants, the participants in this
23 case. They selected their own CDC.

24 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: Okay. So
25 when the process begins and the

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2 applications come in, those CDCs know
3 that they -- and the business has applied
4 with them, are they given the tax credit
5 or is there -- how do you select? Is the
6 lottery for everybody or is it for those
7 people --

8 COUNCILMAN GOODE: It's
9 first-come, first-served, but for those
10 applications that apply on the same day,
11 the Revenue Department can randomly
12 choose among them. The way the Revenue
13 Department has chosen has been by lottery
14 for those people who apply on the same
15 day. But other than that, it's
16 first-come, first-served.

17 So if a business partner
18 applies before the deadline and other
19 business partners apply later, then that
20 person is first. And so as long as the
21 CDC is approved by the Commerce
22 Department and they are ahead of the
23 line, then it's first-come, first-served
24 and they don't have to participate in the
25 lottery.

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2 MR. AFESSA: That's correct.

3 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: I can see
4 it's confusing, and I can understand
5 that. The CDC -- I see Melissa shaking
6 her head. Evidently there's got to be
7 some clarity in terms of the process for
8 these CDCs.

9 COUNCILMAN GOODE: It's only
10 confusing if they apply on the same day.
11 Other than that, it's first-come,
12 first-served. And so as long as your
13 application is first and as long as your
14 CDC is approved as qualified by the
15 Commerce Department --

16 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: They get
17 the tax credit.

18 COUNCILMAN GOODE: -- you get
19 the -- the business partner gets the tax
20 credit.

21 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: And number
22 two gets theirs? How many are they
23 giving out at the time?

24 COUNCILMAN GOODE: However many
25 slots there are are available for

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2 partnerships, but if there are more
3 applicants than there are slots that
4 apply on the same day, then there's a
5 lottery that will now be public.

6 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: So you
7 have given out the slots to the people
8 who come. So you have ten slots. The
9 first six get theirs. They apply early,
10 before the deadline. They're given their
11 partnership.

12 COUNCILMAN GOODE: First-come,
13 first-served.

14 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: On the day
15 of the last day, those people have to --
16 so, remember, CDCs, you have to get it in
17 early.

18 MR. AFESSA: That's correct.

19 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: So you
20 won't get in the lottery.

21 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Thank you,
22 Mr. Afessa.

23 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: Thank you.

24 MR. AFESSA: You're welcome.

25 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Is there

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2 anyone else to testify on this bill?

3 (No response.)

4 COUNCILMAN GOODE: There's no

5 one else to testify on this bill?

6 (No response.)

7 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Seeing none,

8 we will move to the next bill, Bill No.

9 121040, living wage and benefits bill.

10 Our first witness is Brian Abernathy.

11 (Witness approached witness
12 table.)

13 MR. ABERNATHY: Good morning,
14 Chairman Goode and members of the
15 Committee. I am Brian Abernathy, Chief
16 of Staff to the Managing Director, and
17 I'm here to testify on Bill No. 121040.

18 Bill No. 121040 changes the
19 definition of the companies that must
20 provide minimum compensation to their
21 employees by removing the minimum number
22 of 25 total employees employed.

23 The Administration has no
24 objections to this legislation.

25 Thank you for the opportunity

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2 to testify, and I am happy to answer your
3 questions.

4 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Thank you
5 for your succinct testimony,
6 Mr. Abernathy.

7 Are there any questions from
8 this panel?

9 (No response.)

10 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Seeing none,
11 thank you very much.

12 Anne Gemmell, Fight for Philly.
13 (Witnesses approached witness
14 table.)

15 MS. GEMMELL: Good morning. My
16 name is Anne Gemmell. I'm the Political
17 Director at Fight for Philly. I wanted
18 to testify in support of this amendment
19 and also I wanted to bring some workers
20 from the airport to testify to the
21 reality on the ground for thousands of
22 workers at the airport.

23 MS. HENDERSON: Good morning,
24 Councilman Goode and Councilmembers. My
25 name is Cheryl Henderson. I work at the

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2 Philadelphia Airport for nearly three
3 years.

4 COUNCILMAN GOODE:
5 Ms. Henderson, can you pull the mic a bit
6 closer.

7 MS. HENDERSON: Sorry. Okay.

8 My name is Cheryl Henderson. I
9 work at the Philadelphia Airport for
10 nearly three years. I work as a baggage
11 handler for PrimeFlight making sure
12 passengers' bags get where they need to
13 go on U.S. Airways flights. I make a
14 minimum wage of \$7.25 and no tips. It is
15 impossible to do the things I want to do
16 and have the life I want to have making
17 7.25 right now.

18 I'm living with my son, my
19 daughter-in-law in their house, and they
20 have three kids. So it's five adults and
21 three children all in one house. I don't
22 want to be living like this. I want my
23 own place, but I can't even afford a
24 security deposit.

25 I am a grandmother with a

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2 full-time job. I want my own place where
3 my grand-kids can come visit me. I don't
4 want to have to be living with them.
5 Plus my son is still in school and he has
6 to work at the same time because I can't
7 afford everything for all of us, even
8 with us all living together.

9 It is extremely hard right now.
10 I'm living check to check. One month I
11 pay one bill and then I wait on some
12 other bills just so I don't go broke.

13 Making 10.88 an hour would put
14 me in a place where I can afford my bills
15 and some day my own apartment. If I was
16 making that much right now, maybe my son
17 could concentrate fully on school and not
18 have to work.

19 We are not asking for a lot;
20 just enough to have some dignity. The
21 living wage should apply to us, because
22 we can't really live on what we make now.

23 Thank you.

24 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Thank you
25 for your testimony, Ms. Henderson.

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2 MS. RUSSELL: Hi. Good
3 morning.

4 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Good
5 morning.

6 MS. RUSSELL: My name is Tara
7 Russell.

8 Dear Councilmembers, my name is
9 Tara Russell. I work as a wheelchair
10 attendant at the Philadelphia
11 International Airport. I have been here
12 for over four years. I work full time,
13 but I'm hungry. I work hard, I promise.

14 I take care of senior citizens
15 who need help to move around. I love my
16 job. I love taking care of people, but
17 sometimes I ask myself, who is taking
18 care of me?

19 My employer, PrimeFlight, pays
20 me \$6 an hour, and sometimes I get tips
21 from the passengers. Of course, I don't
22 always get tips. The last two weeks I
23 got nothing.

24 It shouldn't come as a
25 surprise. I struggle. I don't make

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2 enough to survive, and that's sad when
3 you work full time. Three hundred and
4 twenty-five every two weeks. I pay 650 a
5 month only in rent, but at the end of the
6 month, I have nothing left and I haven't
7 even paid the bills. So how do I
8 survive? I don't. I borrow \$20 here,
9 \$20 there. I get \$300 in food stamps,
10 but I'm broke. I don't have enough money
11 to eat. It's not fun. It's crazy. How
12 is it that I go hungry even if I work so
13 hard?

14 I always thought that this
15 country rewards hard work. Not at the
16 airport.

17 I hope that my children do
18 better than me, but they also struggle.
19 My oldest kid is in college. He want to
20 open his own business, but it's hard for
21 him too. We cannot afford to pay for the
22 dorm fees. It kills me.

23 People like me are struggling.
24 We are hundreds at the airport. We need
25 your help, ladies and gentlemen. Please

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2 make sure that no one at the airport goes
3 hungry working full time.

4 Plus we all know that low wages
5 too often leads to higher turnovers, and
6 we all want to be able to have an airport
7 that runs well so we can have a future
8 there. We need companies that provide
9 good wages, training, and equipment. We
10 all deserve living wages. Please help
11 us.

12 Thank you.

13 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Thank you
14 for your testimony, Ms. Russell.

15 Our next witness.

16 MS. GEMMELL: So our next
17 witness is Onetha McKnight. She's seated
18 right here. She had a letter to the
19 editor published in the Inquirer on
20 February 10th, and she's just going to
21 read that letter that was published.

22 MS. MCKNIGHT: Good morning,
23 everyone.

24 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Good
25 morning.

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2 MS. McKNIGHT: My name is
3 Onetha McKnight.

4 As an airport attendant who
5 struggles on \$7 an hour, my job is to
6 help senior citizens at the airport. I'm
7 glad that U.S. Airways has committed to
8 stay in Philadelphia. ("U.S. Airways and
9 the City extend their lease.") Now they
10 should require their contractors to pay
11 living wages so we all can live in a
12 decent way.

13 After six years on the job, I
14 am glad that -- I am paid less than
15 minimum wage. I am required to rely on
16 tips.

17 I suffer from asthma and I have
18 high blood pressure. I can no longer
19 afford to pay for my medication, and the
20 medication that I need could some day
21 save my life.

22 My employer doesn't offer
23 affordable healthcare benefits, but who
24 can afford to pay for healthcare on
25 poverty wages?

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2 Our airport should benefit us
3 all. The next time Mayor Nutter meets
4 with airline executives, he should tell
5 them that Philadelphia, the City of
6 Brotherly Love, needs to treat its
7 airport employees with that brotherly
8 love and fairness.

9 Thank you.

10 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Thank you
11 for your testimony.

12 MS. GEMMELL: So our President,
13 President Obama, recently addressed this
14 concept of living wage, working full time
15 and not being able to survive, let alone
16 thrive, in his State of the Union.

17 We have a visitor to
18 Philadelphia. The Secretary of the
19 Department of Labor visited Philadelphia
20 to talk about this issue, and these
21 workers also spoke with the Secretary of
22 the Department of Labor last week, but
23 here locally is where we can have the
24 greatest impact, simply choosing to
25 enforce Councilman Wilson Goode's 2010

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2 21st Century Minimum Wage law at our
3 airport, which is our land. We are the
4 landlord, and it's not being enforced.
5 The law is not being enforced for
6 thousands of workers.

7 And so as we embark as a city
8 on a civic conversation that was an op-ed
9 today about how great the merger is and
10 how great the airport is going to be, we
11 want a great airport too, but we can't
12 have a great airport with constant
13 turnover and problems with the workforce.
14 We cannot be a first-class airport
15 without those things.

16 So, local leaders, you have the
17 greatest impact, and we look forward to
18 working together to make sure we have a
19 world-class airport.

20 Thank you.

21 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Thank you.

22 Any questions for this panel?

23 (No response.)

24 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Seeing none,
25 thank you.

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2 Is there anyone else to testify
3 on this bill?

4 (No response.)

5 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Thank you
6 very much. We will move from our public
7 hearing into a public meeting.

8 The Chair recognizes the Vice
9 Chair of the Committee, Councilman
10 Squilla, for a motion on Bill No. 130012.

11 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: I make a
12 motion on 1300 -- 130012 be approved,
13 with suspension of rules.

14 (Duly seconded.)

15 COUNCILMAN GOODE: All in
16 favor?

17 (Aye.)

18 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Those
19 opposed?

20 (No response.)

21 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Bill No.
22 130012 is reported out of this Committee
23 with a favorable recommendation and the
24 suspension of rules to allow its first
25 reading at the next Council session.

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2 The Chair recognizes Councilman
3 Squilla on Bill No. 121040.

4 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank you.
5 I'd like to recommend Bill 121040 be
6 recommended, with a suspension of the
7 rules.

8 (Duly seconded.)

9 COUNCILMAN GOODE: All in
10 favor?

11 (Aye.)

12 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Those
13 opposed?

14 (No response.)

15 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Bill No.
16 121040 is reported out of this Committee
17 with a favorable recommendation and
18 suspension of the rules to allow its
19 first reading at our next Council
20 session.

21 Thank you very much.

22 (Committee on Commerce and
23 Economic Development concluded at 11:00
24 a.m.)

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CERTIFICATE

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the
proceedings, evidence and objections are
contained fully and accurately in the
stenographic notes taken by me upon the
foregoing matter, and that this is a true and
correct transcript of same.

MICHELE L. MURPHY
RPR-Notary Public

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